

1164 INTAKE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORTS

Chapter: **Child Protective Field Services**

Section: **CPS Central Intake**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **15-26**

Effective Date: **April 2015**

Scheduled Review Date:

Approved:

Lorraine Bartlett, DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 151](#), [RSA 169-C](#), [RSA 170-E](#), and [RSA 541-A](#)

Related Admin Rule(s): [He-C 6350](#), and [He-C 6355](#)

Related Federal Regulation(s): [PREA](#)

Related Form(s):

Bridges, Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

The Division for Children, Youth and Families believes that all children and youth should be safe and works in partnership with families and communities to promote safety in all settings. DCYF Central Intake receives reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. When a report has been received regarding NH Residential Treatment Programs, Institutions, other court-ordered out-of-home placements, or DCYF employees, specific screening practices are in place to determine if a referral should be assigned to specialized staff for investigation to assure objectivity, professionalism, and confidentiality for all the individuals involved.

Purpose

This policy establishes the Child Protective Services' Central Intake Unit's responsibilities that are unique in responding to initial contacts and determining whether reports meet DCYF criteria regarding suspected child abuse or neglect in Residential Treatment Programs, Foster Family Care, and DCYF employee homes. It also establishes how these contacts are to be classified, documented, and referred for further action or services, if appropriate.

Definitions

"Additional Information" means information received on a referral or case that is currently open with Child Protective Services (CPS) or Juvenile Justice Services (JJS), where the new information is duplicative or does not meet the criteria of abuse/neglect. This information received is sent to the District Office as an associated referral, not as a new report.

"Child-Placing Agency" pursuant to RSA 170-E:25, means any firm, corporation, or association which receives any child/youth for the purpose of providing services related to arranging for the placement of the child/youth or receives any child/youth for the purpose of providing services related to arranging for the placement of the child/youth in adoption, including:

1. **"Residential Treatment Program"** means a residential Group Home or Child Care Institution as described in RSA 170-E:25, which may be certified by DCYF pursuant to He-C 6350.
2. **"Foster Family Home"** means a licensed resource home in which placement, care, and a family experience are provided for children/youth who cannot be safely cared for in their own home or by a relative.

"Contact" means a telephone call, oral information provided in person, or written information received by DCYF regarding concerns about the care or maltreatment of a child/youth.

"Corrective Action Plan" means, a written proposal setting forth the procedures by which a Child Care Agency, Child Care Institution, or Child-Placing Agency will come into compliance with the standards set by RSA 541-A and subject to approval of the Department. The Corrective Action Plan shall include the time needed to assure compliance and the action steps/tasks proposed by the agency to reach compliance.

"CPSW" means a Child Protective Service Worker employed by DCYF.

"Credible Report" means the reporter provides information that identifies the child(ren)/youth by name or location, and allegations, which if determined to be accurate, constitute harm or a threat of harm to the life, health, or welfare of the victim of the report. The information needs only to be within the range of possibility or probability and to appear to be grounded in fact.

1. Credibility of a referral is not determined based on the possibility of a finding or on the results of court action.
2. A contact alleging one or more of the following incidents or conditions in the presence of circumstances that show harm or a threat of harm to a child/youth constitutes a credible report:
 - a. Child Neglect as defined in [Policy 1151](#).
 - b. Child Emotional Abuse as defined in [Policy 1152](#).
 - c. Child Physical Abuse as defined in [Policy Item 1152](#).
 - d. Child Sexual Abuse as defined in [Policy Item 1153](#).

"DCYF" or the **"Division"** means the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"DCYF Employee" means any individual employed by the Division for Children, Youth, and Families.

"DHHS" means the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

"Formal Relative Placement" means an individual who has a relative child placed in their home and has complied with the formal DCYF process and completed a written agreement to be a court-ordered out-of-home placement.

"Foster Family Home" means a licensed resource home in which placement, care, and a family experience is provided for children/youth who cannot be safely cared for in their own home or by a relative.

"JPPO" means a Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer employed by DCYF.

"Person Responsible for the Child Abuse or Neglect" or **"Alleged Perpetrator"** means a person who has or is alleged to have psychologically, physically, sexually abused, or neglected a child/youth, regardless of age or family relationship to the victim.

Policy

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| I. DCYF Central Intake Unit receives all reports of alleged child abuse and/or neglect for Special Investigations. |
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- A. All contacts are referred to the Child Protective Services Central Intake Unit at 1-800-894-5533 or (603) 271-6556.
 - B. An Intake Child Protective Service Worker (Intake CPSW) or Supervisor must be available during work hours to receive contacts regarding abuse and/or neglect. DCYF work hours are Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 4:30 PM, excluding holidays.
- II. Referrals regarding NH Residential Treatment Programs, Institutions, other court-ordered out-of-home placements, or DCYF employees are identified as Special Investigation reports or screened-out.
- A. All information must be documented in the same manner as other contacts.
 - B. Residential Treatment Programs, institutional units, and other court-ordered out-of-home placements include:
 - 1. John H Sununu Youth Services Center;
 - 2. New Hampshire Hospital;
 - 3. Health Facilities;
 - 4. Residential Treatment Programs;
 - 5. Licensed Foster Family Homes;
 - 6. Formal Relative Care Providers;
 - 7. Homeless Youth Programs; and
 - 8. Any other Residential Treatment Program, whether licensed, unlicensed, or subject to licensure.
 - C. Reports involving a DCYF employee means a report received regarding: the employee as an alleged perpetrator; or the employee's child, stepchild, or a child living in the employee's household, who is an alleged victim of maltreatment.
 - 1. When an Intake CPSW becomes aware that a referral is regarding a DCYF employee, the Intake CPSW must request to transfer the caller to an Intake Supervisor to complete the referral.
 - 2. The Intake Supervisor must immediately notify the appropriate Field Administrator if the employee has a direct service role with families.
 - 3. To protect the confidentiality of any DCYF employee who is the subject of a referral, the Intake Supervisor must change the identity of the family members to the first initial and last name "LNU" with all identifying demographics removed, prior to forwarding the referral to the Supervisor of Special Investigations.
 - (a) The Supervisor of Special Investigations must immediately restrict the referral upon receipt of the report from Central Intake.

- (b) Special Investigations staff will be responsible for completing the demographic information upon the referral being restricted.
- D. Reports involving allegations of abuse or neglect in a foster family home, in which the only alleged victims in the foster family home are the biological or adoptive children/youth of the foster family, must be forwarded to the District Office of that catchment area and not to Special Investigations.
 - 1. Concerns for conflicts of interest in completing an investigation must be forwarded to the appropriate Field Administrator.
- III. Reports alleging consensual/mutual sexual contact between youth placed in Residential Treatment Programs, which do not involve force, threat, an age and/or developmental disparity, or abuse or neglect by staff, are forwarded to the CPSW/JPPD responsible for the child/youth to address the concerns with the child(ren)/youth, employees, or agency administration as additional information.
 - A. In addition, notification pursuant to section V-E:6 below must be sent by the Intake CPSW, as applicable.
- IV. Intake CPSWs, or Supervisors, will receive contacts, determine the credibility of a report, identify subsequent reports and reports of additional information, and open a child protective referral for assessment pursuant to [Policy 1150 Child Abuse and Neglect Intake](#).
 - A. For [credible reports](#) the Intake CPSW, or Supervisor, must:
 - 1. Request that any written reports from a professional reporter be sent to the Central Intake Unit and/or Special Investigations within 48 hours;
 - 2. Ask the caller about any known safety plans for the child(ren)/youth and document the information in the Bridges referral narrative; and
 - 3. If requested, advise the caller about the DCYF protective investigation process that may include:
 - (a) Information is forwarded electronically to Special Investigations and staff determines how to respond to the referral in order to determine the safety of the child(ren)/youth;
 - (b) Individuals in the home or facility where the alleged abuse and/or neglect occurred may be interviewed regarding the allegation(s);
 - (c) Medical services must be sought if a child/youth requires assistance;
 - (d) Collateral contacts must be made for the completion of the referral; and
 - (e) Foster parents and Residential Treatment Program staff may be required to submit and/or engage in a Corrective Action Plan.
- V. The Child Abuse and Neglect Screen-In Criteria guides the determination whether a report meets DCYF criteria for child abuse and/or neglect.

- A. Intake CPSWs utilize [Policy 1151 Child Neglect](#) in identifying the conditions and indicators of child neglect;
- B. Intake CPSWs utilize [Policy 1152 Child Physical Abuse](#) in identifying the conditions and indicators of physical and psychological child abuse;
- C. Intake CPSWs utilize [Policy 1153 Child Sexual Abuse](#) in identifying the conditions and indicators of child sexual abuse; and
- D. In addition, reports of maltreatment specific to a Residential Treatment Program will be screened-in based on consideration of the following items:
 - 1. Actions/inactions taken by the facility administration following the reported maltreatment to provide for the safety of the child/youth, including any safety plans;
 - 2. The presence of serious injury, harm, or intent to cause harm to the alleged victim;
 - 3. A child who has exceeded the age definition of child in RSA 169-C:3, but has been maintained in court-ordered placement which may be under the guardianship or legal custody of the Division; and
 - 4. Internal facility investigation that supports suspected abuse or neglect.
- E. If a report does not meet the criteria for an allegation of child abuse and/or neglect and will not be referred for assessment (screened-out), the Intake CPSW will forward any reports of violations to the appropriate authority:
 - 1. Reports alleging abuse or neglect within a Residential Treatment Program located outside the State of New Hampshire will be forwarded to the Intake agency with jurisdiction over the state in which the program is located.
 - (a) If there is an assigned DCYF caseworker for the child/youth and/or the program is certified by DCYF, a copy of the referral information shall be sent to the caseworker and certification authority.
 - 2. Reports alleging residential care licensing violations, or certification violations, are forwarded to the appropriate DHHS Licensing or Certification authority for review and follow-up with the program as appropriate.
 - 3. Reports alleging foster care license violations will be referred to the District Office Resource Worker, or Child-Placing Agency that licensed the Foster Care Provider.
 - 4. Reports alleging abuse or neglect by educational personnel within a Residential Treatment Program will be forwarded to the NH Department of Education.
 - (a) If there is an assigned DCYF caseworker for the child/youth and/or the program is certified by DCYF, a copy of the referral information shall be sent to the caseworker and certification authority.
 - 5. Reports that do not meet the criteria of abuse and/or neglect at a state-operated facility, including the NH Hospital and the John H. Sununu Youth Services Center, will

be sent to facility administration for review and copied to the DHHS Human Resources.

6. Reports that are of a sexual nature, but do not meet the criteria of sexual abuse when the child/youth is admitted to the John H. Sununu Youth Services Center or a PREA eligible Residential Treatment Program must be forwarded to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Coordinator at SYSC.

VI. Intake CPSWs, are required to complete the following screens on NH Bridges:

- A. General Referral Information;
- B. Referral Narrative i.e. the name of the reporter if provided by the caller;
- C. Demographics Page, including all known information regarding ethnicity;
- D. Relationship;
- E. Abuse/Neglect Screen for Credible Reports; and
- F. Referral Acceptance.

VII. For each report referred to Special Investigations a response timeframe must be determined.

- A. If an Intake CPSW determines the child(ren)/youth are in imminent danger due to the allegations reported and information received regarding any actions or inactions/lack of safety planning taken by other involved agencies or programs, the Intake CPSW will determine that immediate response is needed.
- B. If an immediate response is needed, the following actions will be completed immediately after discussion with the Intake Supervisor.
 1. Notify the Special Investigations Supervisor or CPSW by telephone and provide the information verbally with the complete referral to follow.
 - (a) The SI CPSW will contact the CPSW/JPPPO (if applicable) who manages the open case for the child/youth, to advise them that a referral has been received for assessment.
 - (b) The SI CPSW will arrange to make the face-to-face contact with the child(ren)/youth and caregiver the same day to respond to the immediate concerns, and establish a safety plan as needed.
 - (c) The SI CPSW will include the CPSW/JPPPO who manages the open case for the child/youth (if applicable) in the Special Investigation process when deemed appropriate and necessary.
 2. If Special Investigations Staff are not available Central Intake will contact the Field Administrator for the District Office that would have jurisdiction.
 - (a) The Field Administrator will contact the District Office Supervisor and determine what actions are necessary.

- (b) The District Office Supervisor will advise the CPSW/JPPPO, or supervisor, who manages the open case of the referral information, if applicable.
 - (c) The CPSW/JPPPO, or supervisor, in collaboration with the District Office Resource Worker, will make the face-to-face contact the same day, respond to the immediate concerns, and establish a safety plan with the parent/provider as needed.
 - (d) The referral will be assigned to the District Office until the safety plan is established.
 - (1) The District Office Supervisor is responsible for restricting the referral upon assignment.
 - (2) The District Office Supervisor will unrestrict the referral to transfer/reassign it to Special Investigations upon completion of the safety plan and contacts.
- C. Any report that does not require an immediate response, will be assigned to Special Investigations to be restricted by Special Investigations staff and investigated pursuant standard practice.

Practice Guidance

Should the demographic information in Bridges regarding a DCYF employee be changed during a protective investigation?

After the referral has been restricted and assigned to SI staff, the SI staff is responsible for entering all available demographic information in Bridges, regardless of the determination.

If a referral is received with allegations regarding a foster child and the foster parent(s) biological children, should 2 separate referrals be created with one sent to Special Investigations and one to the local District Office?

The opening of multiple assessments with different office/units creates duplicate efforts and added confusion for the family that the CPSW will be trying to engage in the assessment process. One referral should be entered and assigned to the Special Investigations staff. The Special Investigations staff will work with the local District Office as needed during the assessment.

If a report is regarding an employee of a District Office who works for a different Division, or an individual who provides services through a community provider, should it be sent to Special Investigations?

Individuals who are not employed by the Division or who have a working relationship with District Office staff can present as a conflict of interest for the local staff to investigate. These situations are still assigned to the District Office. The Child Protective Supervisor will review the circumstances, available staff, and discuss the concerns with their Field Administrator to determine if a different District Office should be asked to take an assessment or if assistance from Special Investigations is appropriate.